

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WELLS



Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year ended December 31st, 1940

WELLS, SOMERSET, July 16th, 1941.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, 1940.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area : 57,175 Acres.

Population as supplied by the Registrar General : 9,771.

Number of inhabited houses on the Rate Books : 2,609.

Rateable Value : £37,180.

Sum represented by a Penny Rate : £151.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

GEOLOGY.—Dolomitic conglomerate at Chewton Mendip and Westbury-sub-Mendip ; Mountain Limestone at Priddy ; Red Marl at Dinder, North Wootton and Rodney Stoke ; Red Marl and River Gravel at Wookey ; Lower Lias at West Pennard, Baltonsborough and Walton ; Allubium and Peat at Glastonbury Moor, Meare and Godney.

OCCUPATION.—Chiefly Agricultural ; Cheese and Cider Making ; Dairy Farming ; Paper Factories at Wookey and Wookey Hole ; Stone Quarrying in various parts of the district. Some of the people at Butleigh and Walton work at Shoe, Leather and Skin Factories at Street and Glastonbury.

EXTRACTS FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR.

			Total.	M.	F.	
Births.	Legitimate	....	122	52	70	
	Illegitimate	....	10	7	3	
			132	59	73	Birth Rate (R.G.) 12.49

Still Births. Total 4. Legitimate 4.

Deaths. Total 128. Male 74. Female 54. Death Rate (R.G.) 13.10.

Number of Women dying in or in consequence of Child Birth : Nil.

Deaths of Infants under one year of age : Total 6. Legitimate 4. Illegitimate 2.

Death rate of Infants : All Infants per 1,000 live births, 45.45.

Premature birth and debility accounted for 2. Bronchitis 2.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) : 13.

Deaths from Measles (all ages) : 1.

Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) : Nil.

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years) : One.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE DURING THE YEAR.

Scarlet Fever : Total Cases 13. Ages 4, 5, 6, 6, 14, 15, 15, 16, 21, 23, 27, 29, 33.

Diphtheria : Total Cases 2. Ages 26, 27.

Puerperal Pyrexia : Total Cases 1. Age 24.

Pneumonia : Total Cases 5. Ages 11 months, 37, 40, 46, 67.

Measles : Total Cases 18. Ages 4 months, 2, 2, 4, 7, 9, 16, 19, 19, 20, 20, 20, 22, 24, 25, 25, 26, 57.

Cerebro-spinal-meningitis : Total Cases 2. Ages 10, 17.

Erysipelas : Total Cases 1. Age 58.

Whooping Cough : Total Cases 17. Ages 14 months, 16 months, 2, 4, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6, 6, 7, 7, 7, 9, 10, 10, 33.

Disease.		Total Cases Notified.	Admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	....	13	9	—
Diphtheria	....	2	1	—
Measles	....	18	1	—
Puerperal pyrexia	....	1	—	—
Cerebro-spinal-meningitis	....	2	—	—
Pneumonia	....	5	—	12
Whooping Cough	....	17	—	—
Erysipelas	....	1	—	—

TUBERCULOSIS.

Age Periods.	New Cases and Mortality during the year.						Deaths.	
	New Cases.							
	Pulmonary. M.	Pulmonary. F.	Non-Pulmonary. M.	Non-Pulmonary. F.	Pulmonary. M.	Pulmonary. F.	Non-Pulmonary. M.	Non-Pulmonary. F.
Up to 5 years							1	
5 to 10 years				1				
10 to 15 years			1	1				
20 to 25 years		1						
25 to 30 years		1						
50 to 53 years						1		

PUBLIC OFFICERS OF THE DISTRICT.

Medical Officer of Health (part time) : Dr. R. B. Manning, M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (London).

Sanitary Inspector (whole time) : Stanley Merton Payne, Cert. S.I.B., Diploma of the Institute of Hygiene, R.S.I. Certificate as Inspector of Meat and Other Foods, R.S.I. Certificate in Sanitary Science as applied to Buildings and Public Works.

CAUSES OF SICKNESS.—There have been no special causes of sickness during the year.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING.—District Nurses under Local Associations, and Health Visitors appointed by the County Council ; the latter keep us informed as to the existence and removals of Tuberculous Cases, and other matters affecting the health of the district.

CLINICS.—There is an Infant Welfare and Ante-Natal Centre in Wells, which is used by people residing in the Rural Area. School and Tuberculosis Clinics are provided by the County Council.

MIDWIVES.—The Lists are kept by the County Medical Officer of Health to whom they report all births, and any abnormal circumstances which might arise therefrom.

HOSPITALS.—Tuberculosis : These are provided by the County Council.

Smallpox : This is also provided by the County Council.

Maternity and Children : Wells Cottage Hospital.

SCARLET FEVER, DIPHTHERIA, ETC.—There is the Joint Isolation Hospital at Shepton Mallet. The Wells Rural District coming within the served area, as the Council is a constituent Authority of the Shepton Mallet Joint Isolation Committee, under an Order of the County Council dated January 5th, 1932, which became operative April 1st, 1932, and Hospital accommodation for the treatment of infectious disease, other than small-pox is provided at Shepton Mallet.

No Institution for un-married mothers, illegitimate children and homeless children exists in the District.

Ambulance facilities for the removal of infectious cases to the Isolation Hospital are provided. There is also an ambulance for the removal of cases to the Wells Cottage Hospital.

Attendance is made weekly by the County Tuberculosis Officer at Glastonbury, and a considerable number of patients from the Rural Area attend here. The homes of notified cases are visited by the Sanitary Inspector and myself, as well as by the County Health Visitors.

In the cases of Diphtheria and Cerebro-Spinal-Meningitis use is made of the County Bacteriological Laboratory, and Anti-Toxin is supplied by the District Council, when applied for by the Medical men practising in the District.

DISINFECTION.—After infectious disease this is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector with the use of spraying apparatus, on the lines recommended by the County Medical Officer of Health. All disinfectants are supplied free by the Council.

LABORATORY WORK.—The County Council have a laboratory at Taunton where samples are examined both bacteriologically and chemically and also for tubercle bacilli.

WATER SUPPLIES.—Owing to repeated bad analyses of samples taken from the springs at Worminster feeding the North Wootton water supply this source of water has been cut off. An additional borehole has been sunk at North Wootton adjacent to the reservoir. The water is now raised by means of a wind-pump permanently in gear, and when the reservoir level gets low the wind-pump supply is augmented by water from the new bore and raised by a petrol engine pump.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.—Alterations to the disposal plant at the St. Cuthbert's Paper Works were put in hand. An additional settlement tank was provided and the large rotary filter bed cleaned out. At the end of the year work is still in hand cleaning out the three smaller rotary filters and replenishing with new filtering media.

Generally speaking throughout the district there are no systems of sewers or sewage disposal with the exception of Wookey Hole, where there is a private system of sewers and disposal.

HOUSING.—As a result of the incursion of large numbers of evacuees (both private and under Government Schemes) the smaller cottages and houses are more or less filled to saturation point. Premises becoming void are often taken by evacuees to the disadvantage of local inhabitants requiring changes of accommodation. No cases of overcrowding have been reported or found during the year.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.—There have been no cases of the existence of bed bugs reported to us during the year, neither have any been found during the course of inspections. There has, therefore, been no action of any kind necessary.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

The following is a summary of the cases reported by me to the Council and dealt with by order :—

	No. of Cases.
Infectious dwellings : Occupiers served with notice as to isolation of patients and disinfection	17
Disinfectants supplied by the Council	27
Dwellings and clothing disinfected as directed by the Medical Officer of Health	24
Nuisances arising from foul and choked drains, foul accumulations, etc.	12
Dilapidated privies repaired or new ones built	4

Samples of drinking water sent to the County Laboratory for analysis	....	....	....	....	40
Samples of milk sent for the tubercle test	....	....	....	....	26
Samples of Accredited and T.T. milk sent for the bacteria test	....	....	....	....	276
Premises licensed under the Petroleum Acts for storage of petrol	....	....	....	....	30
Premises licensed under the Petroleum Acts for storage of carbide of calcium	....	....	....	....	3
Bakehouses (6) Slaughterhouses (12) Inspected	....	....	....	....	18
Public Schools inspected	....	....	....	....	19

REFUSE COLLECTION.

Bi-monthly collections of unburnable refuse are made throughout the District. Scrap iron has been collected privately through the Village Dump Scheme. Waste paper has been collected through the medium of the village schools—profits from the sale of this paper have been accredited to the Rates.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT.

There are registered in the District 16 factories, 95 workshops, 6 bakehouses, 12 slaughterhouses, 107 outworkers. These premises are kept under observation, and as a rule are kept clean.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

Under the Livestock (Restriction on Slaughtering) Order 1940 all the slaughterhouses in the Rural area became automatically closed on January 12th. With the exception of one or two farmer's pigs (for their own consumption) and a few casualties no slaughtering has taken place at any of the slaughterhouses. Regular inspection has therefore, to a great extent, been unnecessary. No meat has been condemned during the year.

MILK AND DAIRIES ORDERS.

On the 31st December, 1940, there were 462 persons' names on the Register of Producers of Milk.

Twenty-four of the Producers have licences for Tuberculin Tested Milk, and eighty of them have licences for Accredited Milk. All these licences are issued by the County Council.

The number of distributors on the Register was 118, divided as follows:—Distributors only 11; Distributors who are also producers, 107.

The greater quantity of the milk is sold to one or other of the Dairy Companies or sent to the large towns, but in the summer a fair quantity of cheese is made, and also a small quantity during the Winter.

During the year I have sent 26 samples of mixed milk to the County Laboratory for the tubercle test, and in all cases except two the milk was found to be free from tubercle bacilli. I have also sent 278 samples of T.T. and Accredited Milk to the County Laboratory, of these 70 were reported as not being satisfactory. In all cases except one, subsequent samples proved satisfactory, and the one has had his licence temporarily suspended.

HOUSING.

No new houses have been erected during the year either by the Council or by private enterprise.

Owing to shortage of building materials and labour and to pressure of other duties, routine housing inspections have had to be discontinued, but complaints as to bad housing conditions and other necessary repairs observed during the course of other inspections are brought to the notice of the owners or agents for necessary attention.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

R. B. MANNING

Medical Officer of Health.